

THE KEY



ADMIRAL DERFORD

The present crisis in the North Sea, where the Russian Baltic fleet sank two trawls of the British fishing fleet, shook the foothold of every throne in Europe, while a quiver of excitement ran through the financial markets of the world.

The threatening probability of war between Russia and England—a probability that became the more menacing because of the undoubted hatred of the masses of each of these countries the one for the other—struck everyone of the widely expanded tentacles of the British outposts and caused the already aroused possessions of the Czar to ferment with additional military precautions.

The probability of a war between Great Britain and Russia, which is always the joker in the modern court deck of cards, with which the world's diplomats play the game of international intrigue and deceit, began when the sound of the shot that rang over the bleak waters of the North Sea reached London, a probability that only the coolest judgment on the parts of both the Russian and British leaders fortunately averted at the last moment.

But that war, which is the talk of London and St. Petersburg, does not show its really dangerous symptoms either in the Black Sea or where the British Channel squadron surrounds the rock-ribbed cliffs of Gibraltar. The real pulse of the British-Russian danger beats far off from the capitals of both empires. The actual outposts of the two countries come together in a mountainous, isolated, slightly populated and altogether barbarous section just north of the Oxus River, a thousand miles from the Caspian Sea and another thousand distant from Delhi, the most northern capital of the Hindoo Peninsula.

Where the Danger Lies.

To the careful and sincere student of the military paradox which has brought the Island Empire and the two Russias face to face in that far-distant territory of the Upper India Plateau, there is a certain pleasure in noticing the series of military moves, first on the part of Russia, and then on the part of the British Empire, by which each nation has gradually crept up—England from the south and Russia from the north towards the key of India, which both nations realize is the picturesque Mohammedan fortress of Herat, while Herat is undoubtedly the military key to the North Indian situation, neither has as yet attempted to occupy it.

To the student of inside history, who knows the open secret that the present Russian-Japanese venture is the result of a Japs only after the British Empire had formally declared the dual alliance, which was virtually a declaration that the Japs were to be allowed to reach the Caspian in their weakest point. The key to the whole situation was that Japan was to have international freedom from interference unless the nation interfered with the Japanese assault upon Russia, was proved to go to war with the greatest naval power on the globe.

For over 15 years Japan had been pointing out the fact that this attack upon the Caspian was the essential thing, and nevertheless Lord Salisbury could not be persuaded to openly join in a defensive alliance with a purely Oriental race.

Why England Joined Japan.

The British dominion over the Egyptian, over the most civilized of all orientals, the Hindoos, made it difficult for the British diplomat to join as an equal an oriental people, which cannot be considered superior, morally or racially to every one of a dozen nations between the grasp of Britain, and ruled by deputies of Britain. The whole key, then, to the present Russian-Japanese spring, as it did, from the British Alliance with Japan arose from an expedition, which, while made light of by the diplomats at St. Petersburg, absorbed Persia into the Russian sphere of influence, and, most important of all, brought the farthest outpost of Russian Cossacks to within a day's ride of Herat, the key to the northern gates of India. Now, this expedition, which resulted in so frightful a history, a European power has joined on equal terms with an Asiatic one, was apparently peaceful enough. Yet with a Russian railroad actually built and in operation to within 40 miles of Herat, the Czar has actually beaten England in the stubborn contest for the control of the northern frontier of India. Only an assault upon some far distant frontier of the Czar, causing an enormous expenditure, and the trouble to transport the scattered forces of Russia to the point of attack, could save the British positions in India. Although the British diplomats will say vehemently deny the Russian menace against the British possessions in India, the actual confessed facts and the actual military occupancy along the entire Indian frontier shows clearly to the trained military student the fact that until the Japs had smashed fully one-half of the Czar's ships and had dragged to the farthest East the tower of the Czar's army, that Russia would have captured the Caspian within three days to have occupied all the important posts in Northern India, and to have an assured supremacy of that territory, which would have required almost superhuman exertion on the part of the British to crush back.

What Russia Wanted at Herat.

The Russians themselves have realized thoroughly the strength of their position just north of India, and its terrible threat against the solidarity of the British Indian Empire. General Soboleff as far back as 1882 urged the military occupation of Herat, and it is not without reason that a number of English experts, knowing India well, have expressed their belief that, were an enemy to occupy Herat with a powerful force, the English army, without having fired a shot, would consider itself half beaten.

He was then chief of the Asiatic branch of the general staff and exercised a large control over the Russian military advance in Central Asia. Subsequently he was appointed minister of war in Bulgaria, where he distinguished himself by his zeal in Russianizing the country, with the idea of hastening the time for a fresh advance upon Constantinople.

Herat is a very large city, and does

not cede in size to Tashkent. It contains 50,000 people. Among the cities of Central Asia and Khorassan, Herat, by its buildings occupies a place next to Meshed. The city is surrounded by walls 12 feet high, with a shallow ditch outside. There are no outer defenses of any kind; nothing that would call to mind the fortifications of a European city. In its present condition Herat is not in a position to defend itself against a European army, since at a mile to the north it is commanded by heights, within 24 hours, occupy Quetta, reach the Indus River and dominate the entire Northwestern Provinces of India, the jewel of the British crown.

What the War Maps Show.

In the foreground of the view is British India, extending northward toward the great mountain chain which separates it from Asiatic Russia. Nowhere do the outposts of the two nations actually touch one another, but at the nearest point are separated by the towering heights and deep gorges of the Hindu Kush, a narrow wedge of Afghan territory.

cluded in the following table:

	Miles
St. Petersburg to Orenburg.....	1,200
Orenburg to Tashkent.....	1,174
Krasnovodsk (on Caspian Sea) to Afghan frontier.....	750
Krasnovodsk to Merv.....	600
Merv to Andjan.....	600
Tashkent to Chitral frontier.....	400
St. Petersburg to Chitral frontier.....	2,774

Kitchener's Plan for India.

Put while Great Britain has temporarily forced the Herat paw into the Japanese trap, where its claws have been seriously injured, the news that Lord Kitchener has on foot a new scheme for his army in India shows the real weakness of the British possessions in the empire's greatest colony. It cannot be disputed that the loss of India would mean the entire withdrawal of Great Britain from Asia. In fact, India lost by Great Britain and in the hands of Russia would mean the beginning of the disintegration of the Island Empire.

Lord Kitchener's latest scheme, roughly speaking, groups the units in the formation in which they can best train in peace for fighting together in war. The conditions of the country, it is pointed out, owing to the spread of railways and telegraphs, have vastly changed since the mutiny, when the present location of troops was dictated by the post of lieutenant general of the Madras army has been abolished. The

to the other, a distance of nearly 1,200 miles. The Moscow Gazette emphasizes the importance of this new railway. In the case of a conflict with England it will permit of a number of troops being thrown on the Afghan frontier.

Wars in Which Herat Figured.

A glance at the record of the past will show that from time immemorial Herat was regarded as an outlying bulwark, the possession of which was necessary prior to attempting the conquest of India, the holding of which by India or by quasi-vassal powers dependent on India would render impossible an invasion of that country. It was so considered by Alexander the Great, by Mahmud and his successors, by Chengiz Khan, by Timur, by Nadir Shah, by Ahmad Shah and by Muhammad Shah, the Persian prince who attacked it in 1837. In the cases of all but the last the possession of Herat led to the conquest of India; in the case of the last the successful defense of that city rendered invasion impossible.

Another fact illustrates the enormous value of Herat. Place an army there and nothing need be brought to it from Europe. Within the limits of the Herat district all the great roads leading to India converge. The mines of the Herat district supply lead, iron and sulphur; the surface of many parts of the country is laden with salt-petre; the willow and the poplar, which makes the best charcoal, abound; the fields produce in abundance corn and wine and oil. From the population, attracted to its

new rulers by good government, splendid soldiers might be obtained.

Such are the military advantages presented by Herat to the power that occupies it, an eye to see and an arm to strike; and an eye to pry into every native court of Hindustan, to watch the discontents and the broodings of the rulers, the heart-burnings of their subordinates. From watching and noting to fermenting and stirring up there is but one short step. Every court, every bazaar in India, knows the presence on the frontier, in a position not only unassailable, but becoming every day more and more capable of assailing, of a first-class power, the secret enemy of England, and professing the most unselfish anxiety to relieve them in their distress. An arm to strike, because a few years of intelligent rule would render the Valley of the Hari Rud capable of supporting and equipping an army strong enough even to invade India.

The possession of Herat by an enemy is not less dangerous to England. The roads converging on it, already alluded to, are traversed by caravans to which no other route is available. It is certain that the city which successfully resisted the rivalry of Meshed, when Meshed was backed by all the influence of the Shahs of Persia, will take a still higher position when supported by the might of either England or Russia. The European power whose influence shall be paramount in Herat will rule the markets of Central Asia. More even than

that, the possession of Herat by Russia means the exclusion of England from the markets of Central Asia.

The city stands on the right bank of the Hari Rud, from which water is brought by several channels. It is built in the form of a rectangle, the north and south faces being about 1,500 and the east and west faces 1,000 yards in length. Enclosing the city is an immense earthwork about 50 feet high, surmounted by a wall ranging from 25 to 30 feet, with a deep moat, which can be easily flooded from the Hari Rud.

The citadel is situated in the center of the city, and is also surrounded by a moat. There are five gates, of which one, however, is closed up, and each is flanked by two bastions. The city is bridged at each of the four gates by a wooden drawbridge, which is raised and lowered by mechanical appliances worked from inside of the walls. Each face of the four walls is furnished with from 25 to 30 bastions. On the exterior slope of the embankment, supporting the walls, are two lines of shelter trenches, one above the other, carried all around the city, except where the gates are.

Thus in case of actual war between England and Russia, it is evident that the true area of hostilities will be right in this ancient territory, which is so fertile and so rich in resources.

On the water England would at once sink every Russian war craft. On the land, Russia would undoubtedly certainly pour hundreds of thousands of

COUNT DE KENDOFF
RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR TO
ENGLAND

EGYPT TO INCREASE WATER SUPPLY.

For sometime the question of the advisability of raising the existing granite dam at Assuan, in order to hold up a larger supply of water for Lower Egypt, has been under consideration. It has now been definitely decided to carry out the project of raising the dam in accordance with the expert advice of Sir William Willcocks, supported by the opinion of Sir William Gassan. It is proposed to raise the height of the dam by 19 feet 6 inches, which will enable the Irrigation Department to retain behind the barrage an additional 100,000,000 cubic meters of water, which at present flows unutilized into the Mediterranean. It is stated that the amount of water held back behind the dam will add another 500,000 acres to the soil of Egypt which is classed under the heading of perennially irrigated. The cost of the work is computed at about two and a half million dollars, and operations are to begin next spring. The cost of the work will be defrayed out of the public debt surplus.

The raising of the dam will still further submerge the Philae temple, which have been strengthened with rubble masonry and steel girders in order to stand the periodic submergence. The engineers are cheerfully optimistic; they point out that the high-level water of the dam will contain hardly any of the Nile mud, which is only brought down at a certain time of the year, and they even go so far as to assert that Philae will rise refreshed every year. Sir Appoldite from these, apparently regretting the five months' submergence as a kind of gigantic spring-cleaning. Refreshed or not, however, there will be one to see it rise, since it is expected from December to April that Assuan will be visited by Europeans, and in the height of the summer when the island will partly emerge the climate puts any and every intention out of the question.

The necessity for the Assuan dam must be fully admitted. No country can be called upon to forego progress and turn itself into a museum of antiquities for the benefit of the traveling world. But at the same time Philae has not been preserved. It has been destroyed in all but the actual dismemberment of the buildings—an inevitable sacrifice in spite of the fact that the temples may still stand for centuries and successive generations may still come to gaze on the ghost of the most beautiful scene in Egypt.

In addition to this plan for raising the Assuan dam, Sir William Willcocks has also proposed another scheme which would provide an additional reservoir for Nile water known as the Fayum, the now dry site of Lake Moeris, over which the galleys of the Egyptians used to sail in the days of Egyptian greatness. In the early days of the lake served as a reservoir for high Nile water, which at low Nile could be let out into the river when the natural flow of the stream was low. The project has been taken round the entrance in the reservoir between the Nile and the sea, and the control of the reservoir by an antagonistic military force meant a period of constant warfare between the Nile and the sea, and the stories of these fights and the tales of the periods of drought and years of famine are very much more numerous than the story of Joseph.

The six remaining pillars of the temple of Perseus at Baalbek, in Ancient Syria, form only a fragment of the columns which once graced Baalbek. The pillars were the work of the Sun, St. Paul Rohrbach, who has written a very interesting account of the ruins, says that Baalbek must have been a very great city, and that the ruins which are to be seen at present date from the second century of the present era. The ruins are of two temple structures, one larger than the other. In one of these temples of freestone let into the west wall. These are attributed to very much earlier times than the Roman period.

The arrangement of the two temples is not at all regular, the larger temple standing on a high, built-up platform, the interior on a separate foundation near it. The smaller temple, which is decorated with pillars and statues arranged at regular intervals and crowned with an extremely rich entablature, is the east side facing the Nile. The connection of the temples with the interior of the outer wall is not clear. The smaller temple, which is decorated with pillars and statues arranged at regular intervals and crowned with an extremely rich entablature, is the east side facing the Nile. The connection of the temples with the interior of the outer wall is not clear. The smaller temple, which is decorated with pillars and statues arranged at regular intervals and crowned with an extremely rich entablature, is the east side facing the Nile. The connection of the temples with the interior of the outer wall is not clear.



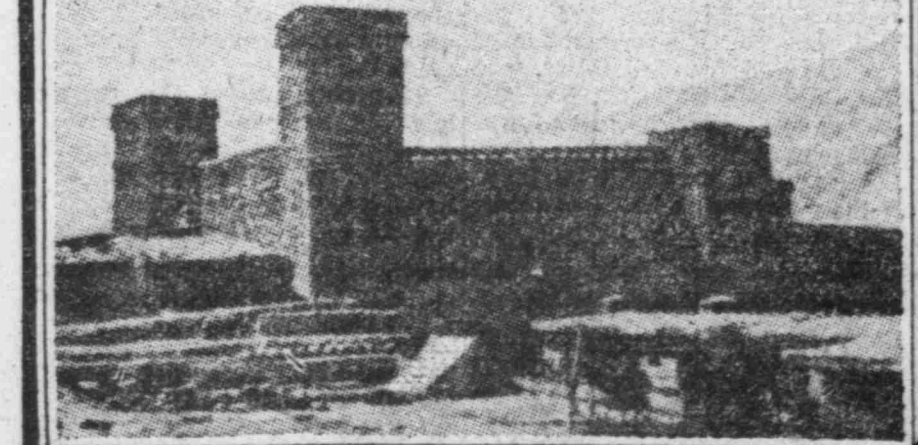
THE ACTUAL
BRITISH FRONTIER LINE
ADJACENT TO RUSSIAN
TERRITORY

ONE OF THE PASSES ON THE RUSSO-BRITISH FRONTIER WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE DEFENDED

ritory. British forts guard the passes at Gigit in the native states of Kashmir and Chitral. Drosch and the Shui pass are situated on the Chitral frontier. On the other side of the Oxus is Turkistan, a part of Asiatic Russia, the buffer territories, which intervene, being colored dark. Within 40 miles of the frontier has now come the railroad of the Tashkent-Orenburg system, which will doubtless be joined up with the existing Samarkand-Bokhara line to the Afghan frontier, but the Ameri does not desire his territory to be invaded by either of the "infidel monarchs," as he terms the Czar and King Edward.

A view of the important distances viewed from a military stand are included in the following table:

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ONE OF THE NATIVE INDIAN FORTS DOTTED ALONG THE FRONTIER

soldiers through the Afghan passes by way of Merv and Herat, and among the native force England into a desperate position. India, and only the siege of Port Arthur and the occupation of the entire Manchurian program of Russia, the immediate danger of the Russian presence against the weak walls of the North British Indian frontier.

Victory for Russia in the Far East spells within a decade a terrible struggle for the possession of India. Should Japan finally triumph and occupy Manchuria, the exhaustion of her defeat would naturally defer Russian plans against India for half a century and possibly more.

The onslaught of the Japanese legions was simply the reply of the British Empire to the Russian railway within 20 miles of Herat and the crowding of the British Empire, which is her Afghan mountain posts separate Russia and England. Russia holds Herat, but thanks to the Japs, she cannot press her advantage against England.